

**i grew up**

i grew up on the reserve  
thinking it was the most  
beautiful place in the world

i grew up thinking  
"i'm never going  
to leave this place"

i was a child  
a child who would  
lie under trees

watching wind's rhythms  
sway leafy boughs  
back and forth

back and forth  
sweeping it seemed  
the clouds into great piles

and rocking me as  
i snuggled in the grass  
like a bug basking in the sun

\* \* \*

i grew up on the reserve  
thinking it was the most  
beautiful place in the world

i grew up thinking  
"i'm never going  
to leave this place"

i was a child  
a child who ran  
wild rhythms

through the fields  
the streams  
the bush

eating berries  
cupping cool water  
to my wild stained mouth

and hiding in the  
treetops with  
my friends

\* \*

we used to laugh at teachers  
and tourists who referred to  
our bush as "forests" or "woods"

"forests" and "woods"  
were places of  
fairy-tale text

were places where people,  
especially children, got lost  
where wild beasts roamed

our bush was where we played  
and where the rabbits squirrels  
foxes deer and the bear lived

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